

WOMEN'S WAGES IN IDAHO

In 2000, the median annual income for women in Idaho was \$12,446, only 49.8 percent of the median income for men, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This large gap between men's and women's median income in Idaho ranked 49th compared to other states; only Wyoming's wage gap was greater. Is the situation for women in Idaho as grim as it appears? The first step towards answering that question is to understand how these income figures were obtained and what they mean.

The median income figures released by the Census Bureau were obtained as part of the Census 2000 Supplementary Survey, an operational test conducted as part of the Census 2000. The Supplementary Survey used the American Community Survey (ACS) questionnaire to collect demographic, social, economic, and housing data. The questions asked are similar to those on the decennial census long form. The ACS is a large, continuous survey conducted by the Census Bureau that mails questionnaires to a sample of household addresses.

The Census Bureau cautions data users that income amounts are often under-reported because people tend to forget small or irregular sources of income. For this survey, income included the eight categories listed below:

- » Wage or Salary Income
- » Self-Employment Income (Farm and Nonfarm)
- » Interest, Dividend, or Net Rental Income
- » Social Security Income
- » Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- » Public Assistance Income
- » Retirement or Disability Income
- » All Other Income (i.e. unemployment compensation, Veterans' Administration payments, alimony and child support, gambling winnings, and other periodic income sources)

In determining the median income, the income of a woman living on public assistance is treated the same as the income of a woman working full-time for wages. But income is not the same as wages. It is, therefore, unrealistic to divide the median income for females in Idaho by 2,080 hours (40 hours multiplied by 52 weeks) to estimate an average hourly wage for women. Not all income is earned by working, and not all women work a typical 40-hour week. For instance, in 2000, 72.2 percent of women in the national labor force worked full-time

(35 hours or more), while 86.3 percent of men worked full-time. Fewer hours typically means less income, so it seems reasonable that women's median income would be somewhat less than men's as measured by the Census Bureau.

For Idaho's full-time wage and salary workers in 2000, women's earnings were 74.4 percent of men's, as shown in FYI Table 1 (see p. 23). Median weekly earnings were \$426 for women and \$573 for men. Using these figures to compute the gender wage gap, Idaho ranked 26th. If we assume for the sake of comparison that these people worked 40 hours per week, the median hourly wage was \$10.65 per hour for women and \$14.33 per hour for men. Though the situation for working women in Idaho looks more promising using this measure, their wages and salaries still lag behind those of men. Some insight may be gained by examining two choices that significantly affect a person's earnings—education and occupation.

Education and income are closely linked—generally, the more education a person has, the higher the income. In 1999, the average earnings of full-time female workers with a high school diploma or the equivalent were \$23,498 in the United States, compared to \$44,669 for women with bachelor's or higher degrees. Men with a high school education earned an average of \$35,121 per year, while those with bachelor's or higher degrees earned an average of \$72,884. Today's highest-paying occupations are likely to require a college education, which explains much of the earnings difference between high school and college graduates.

At 19.1 percent, Idaho ranked 41st in the number of women 25 years or older with a bachelor's or higher degree, as shown in FYI Table 2 (see p. 24). For men, Idaho ranked 38th in the bachelor's or higher degree category at 23.2 percent. Though an equal percentage of Idaho's men and women have a high school education, the women fall behind when it comes to obtaining a bachelor's degree or above. Of Idaho's women, 35.8 percent have attended college without obtaining a bachelor's degree, compared to 31.4 percent of men. Fewer women than men in Idaho are completing the education necessary for the highest-paying jobs, diminishing their earning potential.

The choice of occupation is closely related to a person's level of education. The occupations paying the highest wages in Idaho in 1999/2000 included legal, medical, and computer professionals, engineers, scientists, chief executives, and sales agents in securities, commodities, and financial services. These positions typi-

cally require a higher level of education, and in most of these fields women are in the minority.

In 1999, the largest percentage of women in Idaho were employed in administrative support, 23.7 percent, and service occupations, 20.3 percent, as shown in FYI Table 3 (see p. 26). Wages in both of those occupational categories are relatively low. The largest percentage of men, however, were employed in the well-paying precision production, craft, and repair occupational category—20.9 percent compared to 2.0 percent of women. These numbers are comparable to national numbers available for 2000. In the U.S., 23.5 percent of women were employed in administrative support occupations, 17.5 percent in service occupations, and 2.2 percent in precision production, craft, and repair occupations.

FYI Table 4 (see p. 25) presents a slightly different view of the national 2000 occupational data, comparing the number of women to the total number of people employed in the occupation. Only 29.7 percent of lawyers and judges were women. Women comprised 85.7 percent of those people employed in the health assessment and treating occupational category, which includes nurses, pharmacists, dietitians, and therapists, and 89.5 percent of those in the health service occupational category, which includes dental assistants and aids. Only 27.1 percent of those in the health diagnosing occupational category, which includes physicians, were women. In the category of mathematical and computer scientists, women held 31.4 percent of the positions, though just 9.9 percent of engineers were women. And while women comprised nearly half of finance and business services sales representatives—44.5 percent—only 27.5 percent of those selling commodities were women. With men holding most of the high-paying jobs, it is not surprising that the median wage for men is higher than that of women.

What about when men and women have made the same choices? Do women working alongside men, doing the same jobs with the same education levels, earn the same amount as their male counterparts? Nearly everyone has heard anecdotal information about wage discrimination based on gender. Women with the same education as male coworkers, working the same hours in the same occupations, are still likely to receive lower wages than the men. FYI Table 5 (see p. 26) lists women's earnings by occupation as a percentage of men's for the U.S. in 2000. These percentages range from a low of 59.6 percent in sales occupations to a high of 88.2 percent in service occupations, excluding private household and protective positions. This table indicates that while women fare comparatively better in some occupational fields, their median wage never equals that of men. This is true even though it would be expected that the men and women in each field would have a

similar range of education and experience levels.

In the major occupational categories, the three areas where the wage gap is smallest are: farming, forestry, and fishing; service occupations; and operators, fabricators, and laborers. These are also the three lowest-paying occupational categories. Lower pay overall means less room for variation between men's and women's wages. The highest-paying occupations—managerial and professional specialties—have the third widest gap between men's and women's wages. An examination of the subcategories of this occupational group reveals that women fare significantly better compared to men in professional specialties than in executive, administrative, and managerial occupations. Those women "at the top" are still paid far less than their male counterparts.

Despite the push to receive equal pay for equal work, the gap between men's and women's wages still persists across every occupational category. The gap is decreasing, though. In 1960, women's wages were only 60.7 percent of men's, in 2000 they had improved to 74.4 percent. If that same rate of improvement were projected into the future, women would earn 101.8 percent of men's wages by 2080. The trend narrowing the wage gap slowed in recent years, however, decreasing by only 2.8 percent from 1990 to 2000, compared to an 11.4 percent decrease from 1980 to 1990. Many factors can affect this trend—economic conditions, societal attitudes, and legislation included. While wage information shows that the gap between men's and women's earnings is not as wide as that depicted by Census numbers, the differences are significant.

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FYI TABLE 1: MEDIAN WEEKLY EARNINGS FOR FULL-TIME WORKERS - 2000

Rank	State	Median Weekly Earnings for Men	Median Weekly Earnings for Women	Women's Earnings as Percentage of Men's
1	Maryland	703	589	83.8
2	Vermont	589	493	83.7
3	Arizona	580	484	83.4
4	California	671	551	82.1
5	Georgia	573	461	80.5
6	Massachusetts	714	566	79.3
7	Hawaii	624	495	79.2
8	Nevada	581	457	78.6
9	Delaware	657	513	78.1
10	North Carolina	583	452	77.4
11	Iowa	618	478	77.3
12	New York	674	519	77.1
13	New Jersey	753	579	77.0
14	Texas	587	452	77.0
15	Rhode Island	685	526	76.7
16	Florida	578	443	76.6
17	Arkansas	501	383	76.5
18	Connecticut	773	590	76.3
19	Maine	586	442	75.4
20	Wisconsin	654	493	75.4
21	Kentucky	599	450	75.1
22	Tennessee	596	447	75.1
23	Minnesota	754	562	74.6
24	Illinois	699	521	74.5
25	New Mexico	573	427	74.5
26	Idaho	573	426	74.4
27	Colorado	733	542	74.0
28	Missouri	658	484	73.6
29	Oregon	649	476	73.4
30	South Carolina	623	457	73.4
31	Kansas	625	456	72.9
32	Alaska	798	579	72.6
33	Pennsylvania	671	487	72.6
34	Montana	546	395	72.3
35	Ohio	685	494	72.2
36	Virginia	720	519	72.1
37	Michigan	711	512	72.0
38	North Dakota	556	400	72.0
39	Alabama	582	416	71.5
40	New Hampshire	717	513	71.5
41	Oklahoma	583	412	70.8
42	Washington	723	512	70.8
43	Mississippi	550	389	70.7
44	Nebraska	596	420	70.4
45	Louisiana	586	412	70.3
46	South Dakota	589	414	70.3
47	West Virginia	583	410	70.3
48	Indiana	661	464	70.2
49	Utah	673	456	67.8
50	Wyoming	601	402	66.8
	UNITED STATES	646	491	76.0

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Highlights of Women's Earnings in 2000

This chart represents the median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers 16 years and over, based on annual averages for the year 2000. The percentages are computed using unrounded medians and may differ slightly from percents computed

FYI TABLE 2: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT - 2000

Rank	Men				Women			
	State	HS Diploma or Equivalent Only	State	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	State	HS Diploma or Equivalent Only	State	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
1	West Virginia	39.85%	Massachusetts	37.56%	West Virginia	39.90%	Massachusetts	32.47%
2	Iowa	37.73%	Connecticut	36.08%	Ohio	39.40%	Connecticut	30.92%
3	Ohio	37.51%	Colorado	35.91%	Pennsylvania	39.34%	Colorado	30.86%
4	Pennsylvania	37.01%	New Jersey	33.50%	Indiana	38.71%	Maryland	29.86%
5	Vermont	35.37%	Maryland	33.45%	Iowa	36.85%	New Jersey	29.05%
6	Indiana	35.25%	Virginia	32.44%	Arkansas	36.25%	New Hampshire	28.60%
7	Maine	34.88%	Washington	31.88%	Maine	35.90%	Virginia	28.28%
8	Wisconsin	34.36%	New Hampshire	31.43%	Louisiana	35.78%	Vermont	27.76%
9	Kentucky	34.35%	Utah	31.11%	Wisconsin	35.58%	Hawaii	27.53%
10	Arkansas	33.79%	New York	29.78%	Delaware	35.56%	Washington	27.30%
11	South Dakota	33.41%	California	29.73%	Kentucky	34.89%	New York	26.80%
12	Delaware	32.90%	Minnesota	29.36%	Vermont	34.83%	Minnesota	26.68%
13	Louisiana	32.71%	Illinois	29.11%	Michigan	33.66%	Alaska	25.74%
14	Missouri	31.59%	Vermont	28.96%	Nevada	33.56%	Kansas	25.62%
15	Idaho	31.51%	Kansas	28.22%	Nebraska	33.05%	California	25.35%
16	Tennessee	31.07%	Montana	28.11%	Tennessee	32.92%	Illinois	25.12%
17	Minnesota	30.93%	Oregon	27.76%	Missouri	32.69%	Wyoming	23.93%
18	Wyoming	30.92%	Delaware	27.73%	Florida	31.98%	Delaware	23.68%
19	Kansas	30.77%	Hawaii	27.52%	South Dakota	31.94%	Nebraska	23.63%
20	Montana	30.49%	Rhode Island	27.45%	New Jersey	31.84%	Rhode Island	23.62%
21	Michigan	30.45%	Nebraska	26.66%	Idaho	31.53%	South Dakota	23.60%
22	Oklahoma	30.31%	Alaska	26.28%	Oklahoma	31.53%	Oregon	23.48%
23	Hawaii	30.26%	New Mexico	26.10%	Kansas	31.35%	Montana	23.11%
24	Nebraska	30.09%	Texas	25.95%	South Carolina	31.33%	New Mexico	23.02%
25	New Hampshire	30.08%	Florida	25.85%	Minnesota	30.83%	Utah	22.61%
26	Nevada	29.87%	Arizona	25.22%	Wyoming	30.43%	North Dakota	22.57%
27	Alabama	29.68%	Georgia	25.20%	Montana	30.43%	Wisconsin	22.12%
28	North Carolina	29.41%	Pennsylvania	25.14%	Georgia	30.41%	Georgia	21.82%
29	Florida	28.75%	Michigan	24.94%	Illinois	30.25%	Maine	21.70%
30	Illinois	28.61%	South Carolina	24.86%	North Carolina	29.77%	Missouri	21.54%
31	Georgia	28.51%	Missouri	24.36%	North Dakota	29.68%	Michigan	21.35%
32	South Carolina	28.50%	Wyoming	24.06%	New York	29.66%	Texas	21.31%
33	Mississippi	28.44%	Maine	24.01%	Connecticut	29.57%	Pennsylvania	21.20%
34	New Jersey	28.31%	North Dakota	23.76%	New Hampshire	29.41%	North Carolina	21.14%
35	North Dakota	27.90%	South Dakota	23.58%	Rhode Island	29.37%	South Carolina	21.09%
36	New York	27.76%	Iowa	23.51%	Mississippi	29.10%	Iowa	21.07%
37	Rhode Island	27.67%	Wisconsin	23.37%	Alabama	29.00%	Florida	20.72%
38	Connecticut	27.28%	Idaho	23.23%	Hawaii	28.97%	Arizona	19.87%
39	Massachusetts	27.25%	North Carolina	23.00%	Maryland	28.64%	Tennessee	19.63%
40	Maryland	26.65%	Ohio	22.74%	Oregon	28.39%	Alabama	19.42%
41	New Mexico	26.01%	Tennessee	22.35%	Virginia	28.08%	Idaho	19.12%
42	Oregon	25.94%	Oklahoma	21.95%	Utah	28.01%	Ohio	18.81%
43	Alaska	25.33%	Indiana	21.78%	Arizona	27.75%	Oklahoma	18.71%
44	Arizona	25.31%	Alabama	21.15%	Massachusetts	27.65%	Louisiana	18.43%
45	Virginia	25.28%	Louisiana	20.71%	New Mexico	27.64%	Indiana	18.22%
46	Texas	25.01%	Nevada	20.26%	Texas	27.44%	Mississippi	17.68%
47	Washington	24.66%	Mississippi	19.74%	Alaska	26.26%	Kentucky	16.49%
48	Colorado	22.08%	Arkansas	18.58%	Colorado	26.23%	Nevada	16.27%
49	Utah	21.95%	Kentucky	18.09%	Washington	26.22%	Arkansas	14.89%
50	California	19.42%	West Virginia	14.77%	California	21.63%	West Virginia	13.53%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Supplementary Survey

FYI TABLE 4: EMPLOYED WOMEN IN THE U.S. BY OCCUPATION - 2000

(Numbers in thousands)

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>% of Total</i>
Managerial and professional specialty	40,887	20,345	49.8%
Executive, administrative, and managerial	19,774	8,960	45.3%
Officials and administrators, public administration	753	373	49.5%
Other executive, administrative, and managerial	14,089	5,797	41.1%
Management-related occupations	4,932	2,789	56.5%
Professional Specialty	21,113	11,384	53.9%
Engineers	2,093	207	9.9%
Mathematical and computer scientists	2,074	652	31.4%
Natural scientists	566	190	33.6%
Health diagnosing occupations	1,038	281	27.1%
Health assessment and treating occupations	2,966	2,541	85.7%
Teachers, college and university	961	420	43.7%
Teachers, except college and university	5,353	4,036	75.4%
Lawyers and judges	926	275	29.7%
Other professional specialty occupations	5,134	2,782	54.2%
Technical, sales, and administrative support	39,442	25,154	63.8%
Technicians and related support	4,385	2,267	51.7%
Health technologists and technicians	1,724	1,388	80.5%
Engineering and science technicians	1,272	316	24.8%
Technicians, except health, engineering, and science	1,389	562	40.5%
Sales occupations	16,340	8,110	49.6%
Supervisors and proprietors	4,937	1,989	40.3%
Sales representatives, finance and business services	2,934	1,306	44.5%
Sales representatives, commodities, except retail	1,581	435	27.5%
Sales workers, retail and personal services	6,782	4,306	63.5%
Sales-related occupations	107	74	69.2%
Administrative support, including clerical	18,717	14,778	79.0%
Supervisors	710	428	60.3%
Computer equipment operators	323	157	48.6%
Secretaries, stenographers, and typists	3,328	3,262	98.0%
Financial records processing	2,269	2,083	91.8%
Mail and message distributing	978	403	41.2%
Other administrative support, including clerical	11,108	8,445	76.0%
Service occupations	18,278	11,034	60.4%
Private household	792	757	95.6%
Protective service	2,399	455	19.0%
Service, except private household and protective	15,087	9,822	65.1%
Food service	6,327	3,651	57.7%
Health service	2,557	2,288	89.5%
Cleaning and building service	3,127	1,407	45.0%
Personal service	3,077	2,476	80.5%
Precision production, craft, and repair	14,882	1,351	9.1%
Mechanics and repairers	4,875	250	5.1%
Construction trades	6,120	160	2.6%
Other precision production, craft, and repair	3,887	941	24.2%
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	18,319	4,331	23.6%
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	7,319	2,697	36.8%
Transportation and material moving occupations	5,557	554	10.0%
Motor vehicle operators	4,222	486	11.5%
Other transportation and material moving occupations	1,335	68	5.1%
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	5,443	1,080	19.8%
Construction laborers	1,015	38	3.7%
Other handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	4,428	1,042	23.5%
Farming, forestry, and fishing	3,399	701	20.6%
Farm operators and managers	1,125	286	25.4%
Other farming, forestry, and fishing occupations	2,274	415	18.2%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment & Earnings, January 2001

FYI TABLE 3: DISTRIBUTION BY OCCUPATION IN IDAHO - 1999

Occupation Category	Men	Women
Managerial and professional specialty		
Executive, administrative, and managerial	11.5%	12.3%
Professional specialty	11.8%	13.8%
Technical, sales, and administrative support		
Technicians and related support	3.4%	3.7%
Sales	10.0%	13.3%
Administrative support, including clerical	4.1%	23.7%
Service occupations	7.6%	20.3%
Precision production, craft, and repair	20.9%	2.0%
Operators, fabricators, and laborers		
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	7.0%	4.0%
Transportation and material moving	8.9%	1.3%
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	5.8%	2.5%
Farming, forestry, and fishing	8.9%	3.1%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Geographic Profile

FYI TABLE 5: MEDIAN WEEKLY EARNINGS FOR WOMEN BY OCCUPATION - 2000

Occupation	Median Weekly Earnings for Men	Median Weekly Earnings for Women	Women's Earnings as Percentage of Men's
Managerial and professional specialty	994	709	71.3%
Executive, administrative, and managerial	1,014	686	67.7%
Professional specialty	977	725	74.2%
Technical, sales, and administrative support	655	452	69.0%
Technicians and related support	761	541	71.1%
Sales	684	407	59.5%
Administrative support, including clerical	563	449	79.8%
Service occupations	414	316	76.3%
Private Household	(1)	261	
Protective Service	659	500	75.9%
Service, except private household and protective	357	314	88.0%
Precision production, craft, and repair	628	445	70.9%
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	487	351	72.1%
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	495	355	71.7%
Transportation and material moving	558	407	72.9%
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	394	320	81.2%
Farming, forestry, and fishing	347	294	84.7%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Highlights of Women's Earnings in 2000

(1) Data not shown where base is less than 50,000.

This chart represents the median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers 16 years and over, based on annual averages for the year 2000. The percentages are computed using unrounded medians and may differ slightly from percents computed using the rounded medians displayed in this table.